



Governor Terry E. Branstad  
Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds  
San Wong, Director

Iowa Commission on the Status of African Americans  
Quarterly Meeting  
August 1, 2014  
Lucas State Office Building, Room 424  
321 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
Des Moines, IA

**Call to order:**

Meeting called to order at 1:13 pm by Chair Clair Rudison

**Roll call:**

**Present:** Clair Rudison, Rita Davenport, Lynn Sutton (conference call), Bryan Burton (conference call)

**Absent:** San Wong, Ex-officio, Kimberly Wayne, Alba Perez - staff

**Staff:** Heidi Smith, Kim Cheeks

**Visitors:**

Charles Mercer, North High School Des Moines  
Arnold Woods, President, Des Moines Branch NAACP  
Doyle Landry – Positive Vision  
Lori Young – concerned citizen  
Jennifer Major – Iowa State University graduate  
Tera Jordan – Iowa State University faculty

**Approve Minutes:**

Bryan Burton motioned to approve the minutes of June 26, 2014, second by Davenport, approved unanimously.

**Financial Report:**

Heidi Smith presented DHR's report of state fiscal year (SFY) 2014 at request of commissioners from the June meeting. Shown on the report is state appropriation dollars, federally funded programs are not shown – Client Assistance Program (CAP) \$121,000. Salaries plus benefits for CAS division, as of June 30, 2014.

CAS report - SFY 2015 amount budgeted for 2015. This will be the last year for SERIP – retirement funding from early retirement incentive in previous years. Training & technology funds won't show up until around September.



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- Question – (Landry) – what steps need to be taken to bring back funds for the Status of African Americans director?
- Answer (Smith) – It is too late for this fiscal year, but you could advocate in upcoming legislature, and the request would go into the budget for future budget 2016.
- Comment (Landry) – He has a concern that persons of other ethnicities can't speak for African Americans, what can be done to get the position to be reinstated?
- Answer (Smith) – That is why we have a democracy, feel free to challenge in legislature.
- Question (Woods) - Would that mean a couple of staff positions?
- Answer (Smith) - The number of positions would be up to the director of the department.
- Question (Landry) - Can the public advocate for positions?
- Answer (Smith) – As a citizen you can request meeting with the director to discuss the issue.
- Question (Landry) – Can the director be present at the next meeting and voice her stand on positions being added, restoring administrator position, and issue a public statement?
- Answer (Smith) – She can let her know there is a request.
- Question (Rudison) – Are there internships in Status of African Americans for African American students, to assist people, and an opportunity to earn credits?
- Answer (Smith) – There are interns in the department now, opportunities are available at all times.
- Question (Davenport) – What should we do with the information on the appropriation sub-committee?
- Answer (Rudison) – We will look at the dates of the upcoming session and meet with the members of the new session in 2015.
- Comment (Rudison) – He reached out to all of the African American legislatures suggesting they attend this meeting.

**Division of Community Advocacy and Services**



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## **Public Comment:**

1. Doyle Landry – Positive Vision, he will reference back to comments at the June 26<sup>th</sup> meeting via phone, the article in the Chicago tribune, about issues of African American young men in Iowa City. Taxpayers in the state can see we need dollars to serve these issues. Miracles take money. If the state is committed to racial diversity then it should show it with increase in funding. Good business is good business for entire state. Sept. 21-22 Iowa Black Business Summit taking place in Cedar Rapids. Started in Des Moines in 2009, the website is [iowablackbusiness.org](http://iowablackbusiness.org).
2. Rudison – mentioned looking at the latest Bloomberg report in June that stated Iowa is the worst state for minority businesses.
3. Young – identified there is an Economic Development sub-committee with the Targeted Small Business Program (TSB) and it should be aware of the summit and its advantages of supporting minority businesses.
4. Young – wants to know the current financial state of African American Museum in Cedar Rapids, do they have a state appropriation?
5. Woods – stated the Fort Des Moines Museum did not receive any funds from the state, mostly private dollars.
6. Woods – attended a community conversation with cultural affairs, was shocked at the removal of African American History in the State Historical Museum.
7. Landry – asked if we could get a status report of the \$300,000 that was rejected by the Governor for the African American Museum for the next meeting?

## **Old Business**

### **Reports**

#### **Director:**

Smith reported on behalf of Director Wong, she will share some things going on in the department, in the process of hiring an Administrator for Criminal & Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP), Paul Stageberg has retired. The position is housed in DHR, is non-partisan, and we are taking applications. They are looking forward to filling position. The next DHR board meeting will be in



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October. There are some new members on board. The board represents a member from each commission, and Rudison represents Status of African Americans.

- Rudison – comment – per capita incarceration, Iowa is #1, 1 of 3 black men from age 17 are incarcerated in the state, lives in an urban area near a gang, and neighborhood is surveyed by police. Will that be an agenda item for the board?
- Woods – he visited Anamosa State Penitentiary and an NAACP branch is in the facility. The town is dependent on the prison economically. Questioned why the DHR director does not submit a report to the committee each meeting, and if there is none, it should be stated in written form.

**Office:**

Written report submitted. Cheeks highlighted topics from the last quarter for Commissioners: Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC), participated in a conference call to form a National Coalition of Black/African American Commissions, attended a discussion “Connecting with the Courts – to organize a Fair Courts Coalition, and a lunch & learn – Eliminating Barriers to Inclusion.

**Commissioners:**

**Sutton:** Dubuque, leaders met with disproportionate numbers of African Americans and Latino arrests in the city, concern is of those not being recorded. They questioned arrest records.

Woods commented, to look up CJCC (Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee – Polk County) where the information may be available.

Landry commented the chiefs of police in Iowa City and Cedar Rapids have been very helpful about being supportive of working on it with community

**Burton:** met with Chad Simmons of Diversity Focus about new the initiative to increase number of black teachers in the corridor, make the classrooms look like the populations. They will work with UNI to recruit more teachers of color. It was published in the Cedar Rapids Gazette Diversity Focus will be working with all school districts to help.

Sutton – mentioned she would be meeting with Chad Simmons on Tuesday.

Young – commented to Burton to ask Diversity Focus to look at the Targeted Small Business (TSB) Program, which is underfunded, it’s a way for minorities, or should be, to start up or expand



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businesses. Also wanted to know if Burton could get the status of the TSB Program from Economic Development?

Burton – said he spoke to Simmons about how to help start small businesses in Iowa.

Young – stated that the TSB must be certified, and some may not be aware of that. She feels there are issues with marketing, and that Economic Development is not supporting the program.

**Davenport:** submitted written report. She is a member of the Community and Strategic Plan (CASP) advisory committee – a grant to address disproportionate minority contact in the juvenile justice system. She added, her focus is on higher education. Follow up with information from Iowa College Student Aid Commission to look at education and access to higher education and degree programs for African Americans and especially males. She is still looking at for profit institutions who target low income and persons of color.

Landry – asked why was it important?

Davenport – responded because the need for African Americans to be able to support themselves and the benefits of education in the family. She also felt Status of African American could possibly form a position on predatory lenders over charging African Americans on loans.

Landry – stated there was an effort by Illinois Senator Durbin and others about that subject.

Davenport – replied she has started a conversation with Senator Harkin.

**Rudison:** DHR board – no update, the board will meet in October.

Political involvement – he met with chairs of the Polk County Republican and Democratic Parties on the need for collaboration to destroy silos and create positive change in the state. He also met with the Education Brain Trust and the Des Moines Public Schools about the education system, the lack of diversity, and need for alternatives to education – one shoe doesn't fit everybody.

He met with Gerald Brantley, Spectrum Resources, re-entry wrap around program, federally funded, on collaboration with the commission.

The Pastors and Ministers Alliance (PMA) held a meeting regarding; issues in the community, looking at DOT not giving opportunities to minority contractors, and the Department of Human Services (DHS) issue of African American children being taken from homes more often. He also



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spoke with the Dept. of Education director, and the board of education examiners about cultural diversity into school systems, and plan to tour Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) – teachers and administrators. According to Annie Casey by 2030 there will not be a majority in America, need to look at changing faces. He brought to their attention Dr. Franklin Schargel, who helped the school districts in New York with low graduation rates. Attended the Iowa Juneteenth observance. Invited all the African American Legislators to this meeting. Noted that none were present and that he had received a reply from two of them. Rep. Gaines expressed she might have an issue with time off from her employment.

Question – Davenport wanted to know the status of the website?

Cheeks – replied that updates to the website were still not possible and there was no information available yet about when the state will be finished with all compliance requirements.

#### **New Business:**

All the topics were discussed in commissioner reports.

#### **Next meeting:**

Dates proposed for the next meeting; October 17, November 14, and December 5th. Each commissioner should check their schedule and reply to Cheeks with a date preference.

#### **Adjourn:**

Move to adjourn by Burton, second by Sutton, approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Cheeks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kim Cheeks  
Recorder